

THE WRONGEST PERSON AT THE WORST TIME

by

CD Saftler

Address
Phone Number

FADE IN:

EXT. SANTA ANITA PARK - FESTIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Santa Anita Park hosts a maze of winding, crisscrossing rows of brightly decorated artisan booths, carnival games, and food stands.

Small children run through the aisles, families eat corn-on-the-cob sprinkled with spice, couples hold hands as they stroll. The grounds glisten under a full moon and strings of party lights strung across each pathway in zigzag fashion.

A small stage sports a garage band playing indie rock as an awkward combination of middle aged men, including LEE ROLAND (55), and teenage boys filter into the seating area.

CUT TO:

EXT. FESTIVAL GROUNDS - LEATHER ARTISAN BOOTH - NIGHT

Stationed strategically, JOE FRAGOTTI (35), nonchalantly fondles a leather belt hanging from the corner display of a booth filled with leather craft. He keeps a keen eye toward the entrance.

CUT TO:

EXT. FESTIVAL GROUNDS - FACE PAINTING BOOTH - NIGHT

With a broad smile, MISSY ANDERSON (60) steps outside the face painting booth and wanders the brightly decorated grounds beckoning young imaginations, and their parents' wallets, back to the booth.

Missy circles around a smiling, awe-struck child sprinkling her with fairy dust (iridescent glitter); Missy engages the parents with a warm smile, and motions them toward the booth. Missy twirls away from the girl out into the aisle.

CUT TO:

EXT. FESTIVAL GROUNDS - LEATHER ARTISAN BOOTH - NIGHT

Joe looks at his watch, then turns quickly to head toward the rendezvous point.

CUT TO:

EXT. FESTIVAL GROUNDS - AISLE BY LEATHER BOOTH - NIGHT

The two collide mid-aisle in an explosion of fairy dust.

JOE
What the --

MISSY
Ahhhh! Oh my god, I'm so sorry!

Joe spits glitters, and brushes it from his eyes and face.

JOE
Hell!

MISSY
Are you okay? Crap.

JOE
Sorry. I didn't see you.

MISSY
Dammit.

She looks optimistically toward the parents as they usher their child off in the opposite direction. Missy turns her attention toward assessing Joe.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(noticing his dismay)
It'll come off. Eventually. That's
all I had, too. Dammit!

JOE
Sorry.

Joe sweeps his hands fruitlessly across his shirt attempting to de-glitter.

Missy's gaze moves upward from his muscular arms and torso to a glimmering stubbled face. She snickers.

MISSY
Ummm...you got a little something.
Right...here.

She pulls a tissue out from her bra and brushes his beard, leaving traces of white lint in his stubble. She reassesses.

JOE
Thanks, I'm sure its fine.

MISSY
Are you meeting someone?

JOE

What?

MISSY

I think you should come back to my booth.

JOE

That's not necessary.

MISSY

You're completely covered in fairy dust. I can take care of you professionally.

Joe looks quizzically at her.

MISSY (CONT'D)

If you're meeting someone, I'm sure this is not the strong first impression you wanted to make.

JOE

(eyes narrowing)

Who said I was meeting anyone?

MISSY

So you're here, on a beautiful warm romantic night like this, all by yourself?

JOE

Yes. Yes, I am. And I'm fine. I actually like the glitter. Its fun.

Joe tosses up a small amount of glitter. We hear the band's finale and CONSERVATIVE APPLAUSE in the background.

JOE (CONT'D)

See? Totally me. Now, please, I don't want to keep you any longer. As a matter of fact, I insist you get back to your booth. Wouldn't want to keep the little Mermaids from their destiny as Ariel, now would we?

As he speaks he gently turns Missy around toward the direction that she came from and gives her the tiniest of pushes. Missy spins and steps towards Joe.

MISSY

You know, I felt bad for you at first, getting fully doused like that, but now, you're getting just a little bit pushy and I have to say, I don't much care for it.

JOE

Ma'am, I said I was sorry --

MISSY

(deep intake of breath)
Don't ma'am me! Do I look like Eleanor Roosevelt to you? My name is Melissa, but my friends call me Missy. You can call me --

JOE

Missy --

MISSY

(feigns being irked)
So you're a friend, are you? Huh. Except, I know the names of all my friends, and I don't know your name.

JOE

Joe.

MISSY

You got a last name, Joe? Or are you one-name-famous, like Liberace.

JOE

No ma'am. Missy. Name's Fragotti. Joe Fragotti.

Smiling, they shake hands.

MISSY

I guess you can say we've "Bonded."

Joe's eyebrows raise inquisitively.

MISSY (CONT'D)

Never mind. Nice to meet you, Joe Fragotti.

JOE

Now if you'll excuse me --

MISSY

(still holding his hand)
 No, Joe Fragotti, I won't excuse
 you. Not until you give me your
 number, and let me pay to clean
 your shirt. Truth is, this sparkly
 shit never comes out unless you
 have it dry cleaned.

JOE

If I do, you promise to continue
 your crop dusting on the other side
 of camp? Wouldn't want lightening
 to strike twice.

With a flourish, and a fake Shakespearean accent, Missy
 plucks her cell phone from her sash and hands it to Joe.

MISSY

(fake British accent)
 I promise, sweet sir, to twinkle
 'til morrow in yon fair grounds.

He looks up from inputting his number.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(back to normal, points
 across the fair)
 I'll be over there all night.

Joe hands her back her phone.

Missy proudly examines his number. Adds a smiley face.

Joe looks at his watch, then over to the entrance and sees:

LEE ROLAND heading his way.

All business now, Joe takes on the persona of muscle-for-hire
 and approaches Roland.

JOE

(extends his hand)
 Mr. Roland?

LEE

(not taking his hand)
 You get mugged by ten year old
 girls?

Missy turns to make her way back to the booth among the
 colorful banners and lights.

Grinning like the proverbial canary-eating cat, she stops occasionally and chats with artisans buddies along the way.

FADE TO BLACK.